



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

# NEWS RELEASE

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Department of Toxic Substances Control

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## **State of California Reaches Historic Settlement for Stringfellow Hazardous Waste Site**

**SACRAMENTO---** The California Environmental Protection Agency's Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) today announced an agreement in principle to settle one of the most significant and storied hazardous waste site cleanup litigations in state history. The agreement, between the State of California and the industries who disposed of over 30 million gallons of hazardous wastes at the Stringfellow Superfund site in Riverside County, provides a framework for ending over 15 years of continuous litigation. A complete listing of the companies joining in the agreement is attached. Over the past decade these companies have participated with the State and the United States cleaning up the site.

"Today's important agreement is the culmination of more than a year's worth of cooperation and intense negotiations between the defendants and the State of California to resolve this matter. It will allow us to focus on the remaining contamination that exists and should facilitate the State's receipt of resources needed to provide for the ongoing protection of nearby residents," said Jesse R. Huff, DTSC Director. "It demonstrates the benefits that accrue when responsible parties and the government work together to resolve environmental problems."

Under the terms of the agreement, DTSC will assume sole responsibility for future work at Stringfellow, and will ensure a continued commitment to environmental and public health protection at the site and the neighboring community of Glen Avon.

"This agreement is good for the environment and for the people of our state, especially those who live, work and go to school in Glen Avon," said Huff. "It demonstrates California is fully committed to the long term protection of our natural resources, including finishing the cleanup of the millions of gallons of hazardous industrial wastes which were disposed at Stringfellow and continuing to protect groundwater in the area."

- M O R E -

Under the terms of the agreement, the State of California and the private party defendants will jointly request a stay of their respective appeals of the recent decision in the USA v. Stringfellow lawsuit, which is now pending before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. In addition, the defendants have agreed to drop their demand for reimbursement of their past costs at the site totaling approximately \$90 million. The State will assume all future costs for cleanup and long term maintenance of the site, estimated to be in excess of \$200 million.

The agreement is contingent upon the State of California receiving sufficient funding from its insurance carriers to reimburse the United States government for past response costs and to fund the State's future response costs associated with the site. The State's claim against its insurers is currently pending in Superior Court in the County of Riverside. The next phase of this trial is expected to begin in late 1999.

In 1983, Stringfellow Hazardous Waste Facility became the first federal Superfund site in California. Located in Pyrite Canyon in Riverside County, Stringfellow was operated as a liquid industrial waste disposal site from 1956 until its closure in 1972. During that period, over 30 million gallons of industrial wastes from metal finishing, electroplating and DDT production were placed in unlined evaporation ponds in the 17-acre disposal area. Over the years, the contents of these ponds moved through the soil and fractured bedrock underlying the site, entered the groundwater and migrated south under the community of Glen Avon. Since 1989, the community has received its water from public utilities and affected groundwater is not used in the community.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), DTSC and the defendants conducted various investigative and cleanup work at the site until 1996, at which time DTSC assumed operational control. Since taking over the operation of the Stringfellow site and its Pre-Treatment Plant operations, DTSC has:

- installed a new 1.5 mile effluent disposal pipeline linking the Pre-Treatment Plant and the Santa Ana Regional Interceptor industrial sewer line;
- installed 71 new monitoring and extraction wells in the historic waste disposal area;
- conducted soil flushing and two-phase extraction field treatability studies as part of the ongoing Supplemental Feasibility Study (SFS) being conducted for U.S. EPA;
- conducted three-dimensional seismic reflection surveys of the site and surrounding canyon;

- conducted site maintenance activities and semiannual sampling and analysis of site and community groundwater wells; and
- upgraded Pre-Treatment Plant waste treatment facilities.

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*DTSC is one of the six Boards and Departments within the California Environmental Protection Agency.*

**Responsible Party Signatories to  
Stringfellow Hazardous Waste Facility Agreement**

Alcan Aluminum Corporation  
Alumax, Inc.  
Boeing North American (sued as Rockwell International Corporation)  
The Deutsch Company  
General Electric Company  
McDonnell Douglas Corporation  
Millenium Petrochemicals, Inc. (sued as National Distillers and Chemical Corporation)  
Montrose Chemical Company of California  
NI Industries, Inc.  
Northrop Grumman Corporation  
Quemetco, Inc.  
Rainbow Canyon Manufacturing Company  
Rheem Manufacturing Company  
Rhône-Poulenc, Inc. (successor by merger to Stauffer Chemical Company)  
Rohr, Inc.  
Stringfellow Entities  
Weyerhaeuser Company